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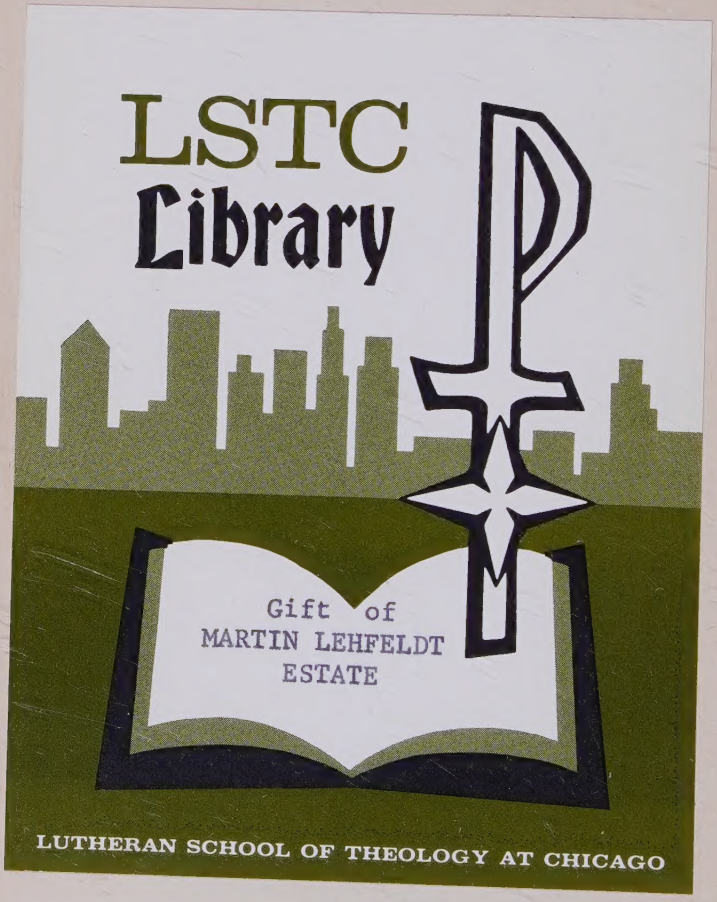
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Jesus
And the Problem of Human Life

WORKS BY
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JESUS And the Problems of Human Life

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Jesus
And the Problem of Human Life

A Threefold Sermon

By
DWIGHT GODDARD

SECOND EDITION

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Preface

IN the early part of 1915 there was sent out to personal friends of the author an interweaving of the Four Gospels into one connected account of the life and the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, in which the attempt had been made by free translation and paraphrase to bring out their unity from a modern point of view.

The present sermons are an attempt to set this Good News of a Spiritual Realm into relation to present-day thought, and to show its value and usefulness to any one who has felt a desire to make that supreme adventure in faith, a quest for a higher spiritual life, with Jesus as a guide, an inspiration, and a Saviour.

DWIGHT GODDARD.

Ann Arbor, Michigan.

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I

Three Possible Solutions of the Problem of Human Life

"Our life, says Eucken, does not move on a single level, but upon two levels at once—the natural and the spiritual. The key to the puzzle of man lies in the fact that he is 'the meeting point of various stages of Reality.' All his difficulties and his triumphs are grounded in this. The whole question for him is, which world shall be central for him—the real, vital, all-embracing life we call Spirit, or the lower life of sense?"—Evelyn Underhill.

" . . . there remains only the inexorable 'either-or': either the power of a new world is operative in man, and makes him strong outwardly and inwardly, or the whole life of man is spiritually lost, a great illusion, a great error."—Rudolf Eucken.

"The root question or outstanding controversy between science and faith rests upon two different conceptions of the universe. The one that of a self-contained and self-sufficient universe with no outlook into, or links with anything beyond, . . . and the other conception, that of a universe lying open to all manner of spiritual influences, permeated through and through with a Divine Spirit, . . . a universe by no means self-sufficient or self-contained but with feelers at every pore groping into another supersensuous order of existence."—Sir Oliver Lodge.

I

Three Possible Solutions of the Problem of Human Life

ONE of the strange things to a foreigner going into China is to see the natives openly worshipping at different temples at different times. The Chinaman is a Confucianist in social relations and in official life; when he wishes to find a lucky day for embarking in business, or building a house, or getting married, he is a Taoist; and when it comes to sickness or death in the family he is a Buddhist.

This sort of thing appears strange to us who are accustomed to think that religion, and morals, and truth are almost synonymous. But wait a moment, is this so very different from what we see about us every day? In business and social relations we see crowds of people worshipping the god of money, Mammon, or Billikin, the god of things as they are. The people who do this are believers in a kind of naturalistic or scientific interpretation of life that I am going to explain more fully in a few minutes.

Now when these same people attend lectures or read books and try to think a little more seriously than common, when they let the intellectual side of their nature come to the surface and they become conscious of ideals of beauty and service and conduct, then they are worshipping at the shrine of intellectual idealism, about which I am also going to speak more fully in a few moments.

Now once again, there come to these very same people, as to every one, times of sorrow, or moral conflict, or of sickness, when the charms of pleasure and power and the excitement of business turn to ashes, when even the airy fabric of their ideals seems unreal and all that but yesterday seemed most substantial now seems vanishing into thin air. At such times as these when pain and sorrow and loneliness are insistent then these same people turn to worship the Christian's God of Mercy; and they do it without the least thought that they are in a religious sense inconsistent.

How very, very few are the ones among our own people that always worship at the same shrine; that are just the same in their religious devotions whether in times of sickness or pleasure, in wealth or in poverty, in the stress of business or the leisure of reading. Is it not true that most of us meet the different situations of life in a kind of hit or miss fashion? I do not

think that any one intends to be hypocritical or inconsistent in their religious life, but as a matter of fact they are often very inconsistent and habitually change the expression of such religious faith as they have, as the day brings business or pleasure, leisure for intellectual study, the hour of church worship, or the crucial time of sickness or of misfortune.

It is hardly right to call such faith religious at all, it is so formal and hypocritical, so empty and selfish. It borrows the form of religion without its heart and its virility. It is usually the inherited faith of some godly parent or ancestor, but so diluted that it does not call for personal hardship or self-denial, and sometimes it is the remnant of an earlier personal faith that has lost its force. It usually accepts some idea of an overruling providence, but thinks in a hazy way that if one observes some routine ceremonial, or joins the church, or lives up to the conventional ethics of the day, that in some general way things will work out all right in the end.

Am I exaggerating if I assert that our times are characterized by this absence of any clear and definite religious faith? If this is true, and I do not see how any one can help but agree with me that it is true, there must be some good reason for it. The reason that I offer for this general lack of deep religious faith is this:

There is a general lack of understanding of the fundamental problem of human life. In fact very few people appear to understand that there is any such problem at all, and fewer still are the ones who have thought out any reasonable explanation or solution of this most serious problem.

The purpose of this sermon is to bring this great problem of human life clearly before the mind and then to consider three possible ways of explaining it.

First let us get the problem clearly before us. When we begin to think about the place that man occupies in the universe we are confronted by emphatic contradictions. Man appears to be the chief end of nature, but we see him forever at war with his natural environment. When he succeeds most in a worldly sense, he has the strongest kind of an inner feeling of shame and defeat. We are conscious of natural appetites, desires, and passions, that are flatly opposed by the aspirations of a spirit or soul within. We can explain almost all his faculties and powers as a development from a simple beginning to their present complexity, but we cannot explain all. There always remains something in the ideals of man, in his spiritual longings, and his altruistic unselfishness, that is inexplicable from any scientific standpoint.

Why are we naturally selfish and yet honor

altruism? Why is a man ever willing to lay down his life for another? Why is a man willing to forego comfort and convenience in order to satisfy an inner desire for the good, the true and the beautiful? To explain these contradictions is the problem of human life.

There are three common ways of attempting the explanation and as we accept one or the other we very largely condition the conduct of our lives and our religious faith. These three ways are as follows: First, The scientific or naturalistic. Second, The idealistic. Third, The spiritualistic.

In order that we may face the problem of life with more confidence and intelligence, and have a surer ground for our religious faith, it is worth while to study carefully these three explanations.

The scientific, or the naturalistic, explanation is based on a scientific study of nature. According to scientists, there is but one realm of reality, the natural universe; everything that is can be studied and known; everything that is is a coördination of cause and effect under the interaction of so-called natural laws, which if fully understood would furnish a sufficient explanation of all phenomena. The result of cause and effect operating in a domain of time and space is universal motion and incessant change. There is going on an incessantly

changing correspondence with a constantly changing environment, resulting in unlimited variations and endless struggle for existence, and a consequent survival of the fittest. Birth, growth, struggle, decay, death, is the inevitable cycle of a universal natural experience.

The human soul is simply the highest and most complex result of this natural evolution. Because of his good fortune in possessing an intellect, by reason of which he can take advantage of natural laws to control them for his own benefit, man is in a better position to survive in this cosmic struggle. Ideals and aspirations are the inherited accretions of millenniums of experience that have been passed down by the laws of heredity to be interpreted by the intuitive faculties as a guide in the inevitable struggle for self-assertion and self-preservation, and as a guarantee for the further development of the organism.

The answer of naturalism, then, to the problem of human life is: that the contradictions are only seeming and are the questions that the mind raises as to whether the immediate happiness that will come from gratifying a present physical appetite is more to be desired than the more remote happiness that will come to one from considering social well-being, the larger future good that will come from a present self-denial.

The second or idealistic explanation starts with much the same scientific explanation of natural phenomena, but parts company with it in its conclusions. The ultra naturalist says that the interaction of natural forces is a sufficient explanation of all phenomena. The intellectual idealist says, no, it is not sufficient, it is too mechanical. Even a man has a purpose in life and plans his work. Surely in nature there must be some purpose, some plan, some life process. So the idealist sees back of the universe an intelligent purpose, or an ideal, towards which everything is tending. Some idealists see God in this Ideal; others see only an ideal goal; still others are satisfied with the thought that back of the universal life process is intelligence. But all alike question the existence of anything outside the natural realm to aid one in attaining the ideal other than the help that comes from keeping our lives in harmony with the ideal or with the ideal life process.

The intellectual idealist explains the problem of life by saying that it is the conflict in a man's mind that goes on when he comes to choose between a natural good and an ideal good. To both the naturalist and the idealist the conflict is all within the one realm of a universal nature; they differ as to whether there is above nature an intelligent and moral purpose.

The spiritualistic explanation of this problem of life starts with the assertion that human beings have connections with two entirely distinct and independent orders of reality. First, they are children of nature and live in a world of nature. Second, they have kinship in the Spiritual Realm also, and the antagonisms of life are explained by natural life pulling one way and the spiritual life pulling another way.

As children of nature we are subject to all the natural laws. We are conscious of being surrounded by multitudes of other human beings all engaged in a life struggle with a more or less hostile environment. Physical advantage is measured by strength of body and cleverness of mind. Natural happiness is sensual enjoyment; natural success is survival and the accumulation of advantage and position, with the consciousness that we must inevitably follow the usual natural cycle of birth, growth, labor, decay, death.

But in the spiritualistic explanation this is only one side of life, the natural side. There is another and a brighter side, the spiritual side. Human beings have also kinship in a Spiritual Realm. Just as the intellect is given us so that we may take advantage of sense perception, memory and reason, in the struggle for existence, so the intuitive faculties are given to human beings to sense the immaterial and

spiritual forces such as the forces of love, friendship, faith, honor and duty, that are all about us and to which human beings are susceptible. There is certainly something within us that responds to these spiritual forces, that demands our allegiance, that speaks of moral duty. We have inner visions of something better than physical strength and mental cleverness; we feel instinctively that our highest interests are not with nature and that we have a moral right to rebel against nature's determinism. We even feel that we are superior to natural time and space; that life for us may mean far more than mere natural existence. In fact the presence of so universal a longing for the homeland of the soul becomes a proof that there must be reality where so general a longing may be satisfied.

We saw that the scientific naturalist was content to believe that the antagonism in a man's soul between the natural desires and the spiritual aspirations was but the jogging of the memory to remind him that the more remote or social good might be better for him than the immediate gratification of some physical desire. To the one who believes in the spiritualistic explanation, this is far too trivial a reply. To the spiritually minded man the antagonisms of life are a life and death struggle for the possession of a soul. On the one hand he sees a

world of nature pulling him down to its own low level; on the other hand he sees a realm of the spirit calling him upward to a higher order of life and, not only calling him, but offering help in his honest efforts to reach the higher and the nobler life.

To the man who cherishes the spiritualistic explanation there is very good reason why he should be dissatisfied with the lower and temporary and sordid pleasures of the senses, because he sees just within his reach the more satisfying joys of a timeless spiritual life.

Having before us now the three explanations of this problem of life, let us compare them, to see which is the most reasonable. Let us freely admit that natural science has thrown a flood of light on the problem of life, and has corrected many false notions, but let us hesitate to believe that it has solved the problem. The reason that it has not solved the problem is this: it persists in maintaining that there is but one side to life and that the natural side; it persists in maintaining that everything that is real can be examined by test tube and microscope; it persists in holding that the interaction of natural forces is a sufficient explanation of all the phenomena of the universe.

We have the right to ask how the microscope can explain the feeling that comes over us at times that we have a right to dominate nature?

We may feel ignorant as to how we may claim and use this higher power and yet feel certain as to its reality. Science tells us that it is a superstition and reminds us of our limitations. How can a laboratory explain our intuitive sense as to right and wrong? The very general belief in the immortality of the soul and of a life after death are too ingrained in our deepest consciousness to be easily laughed out of court by some cock-sure natural scientist referring to the book and page where it says that time and space are universal and that natural law explains everything.

The fundamental law of nature is self-preservation, but humanity is continually overriding that law and making altruism and heroic self-denying service its rallying cry. When nature is most heartless that clarion call to self-forgetting service wins the day and the first law of nature is forgotten. Nature can explain a narrow selfish love for one's family, or for some benefactor, but unselfish love, "The greatest thing in the world," it cannot explain.

It is not enough to claim that evolution is slowly but surely lifting humanity towards a higher type of life and society; it is not enough to claim that although there is universal death of individuals that there is a racial advance. Some more adequate explanation must be offered if we are to face the

problem of life with confidence and serenity, and in a truly religious spirit.

Let us now turn to the explanation that intellectual idealism offers. We can all admit that we are profoundly influenced by study and thought of purely intellectual ideals without at all admitting that intellectual idealism answers the great problem of life. In the first place we may well raise the question whether the intellectual process is the source of the inspiration that comes from study and thought; or whether repose and thought only place us in that receptive condition by reason of which we are sensitive to the action of the spiritual forces that are independent of the natural realm and are in themselves creative and dynamic. We will very grossly deceive ourselves if we think that the intellectual process is the originating source of inspiration.

Again, the human intellect is too weak and frail to be trusted as the source of, or a guide to, the ideal; the human will is too weak and changeable to maintain the necessary attention and continuity.

Let us suppose for the minute that there is in nature a universal push or vitality that is working out a resistless progress towards the ideal, and in so far as we can understand and conform the conduct of our lives to this ideal life-process we shall be carried along with it.

Do you not see what a burden this places on the mind, if our advance towards the ideal is limited to what the mind and the will can understand and appropriate? You will have your opinion of the ideal, I will have mine; and as we try to work them out, we may be helping each other or we may be hindering each other. As the years pass our appreciation of the ideal will be constantly changing; there can be no unity of ideal, no wholeness, no standard. If you drop your ideal in order to help me towards mine, you will be disloyal to your own ideal, which was to be the very thing that was to be your guide. And even when we think most surely that we are true to the ideal, we may be mistaken; the true ideal may be something quite different; there will always be present the tendency to make the ideal coincide with the conventional. No, intellectual idealism is a beautiful dream that awakens enthusiasm, especially in youth and in good health, but in the end it is limited, transient and discouraging.

The problem of human life involves the possible connection of the soul with a higher order of existence and intellectual idealism leaves the solution of it to the intellect which is a natural faculty and therefore is incompetent to judge the problem. In fact both idealism and naturalism belittle the problem and try to gloss it

over. It is not until one entertains the spiritual solution that the real importance and fundamental character of the problem is appreciated, and then the problem assumes transcendant importance. It is not until we perceive within ourselves the beginnings of a higher spiritual life that we recognize how diametrically opposed are the physical passions and spiritual aspirations. It is not until we perceive that these antagonisms are the indication of a spiritual movement for which we are in some way and in some measure responsible, and whose issue conditions not only the few passing years of the natural life but the eternal life of the spirit, that we awake to the supreme importance of a correct understanding of this supreme problem of human life. On the one hand is a world of nature that is entirely indifferent to our behavior or our sufferings, that is steadily drawing us down to its own inexorable level, and on the other hand the realm of the spirit beckoning us onward and upward and offering to help us in our efforts to reach the nobler and higher life of the spirit.

If we are honest with ourselves we must admit that the fight going on within us between the sensuous and the spiritual is no mere rivalry of ideals, but it is a fight to the finish for a higher or a lower life. Naturalism and idealism both admit that the individual life will

probably fail and certainly die, but they say that the race life will advance by an infinitesimal increment. The spiritual solution alone holds out the hope of certain victory for the individual. The spiritual solution asserts that there are spiritual forces, creative activities, acting within human beings which if appealed to can so far dominate the conflicting elements of natural desires that the life process will be raised to a higher level; in other words that it is possible for a human being with the aid of the beneficent spiritual forces of the higher realm to transcend the world of time and matter, and to rise into and become a part of the higher spiritual realm.

If a man in his heart of hearts believes that the naturalistic explanation is the most probable, he cannot help but conform the conduct of his life to natural laws to a greater or less degree. The most characteristic of all natural laws is the law of self-assertion and self-preservation. It forever prompts one to labor, at first to gratify hunger and to ward off pain and death; then it prompts to the gratification by indulgence of all the natural appetites and passions; and then on and on in the accumulation of wealth and position by reason of which one can the more easily gratify all these natural desires.

Very few people accept the naturalistic ex-

planation as the exclusive basis of their religious faith, but very, very many people let it color and practically control their conduct for six days in the week and then some. It is true that in times of sorrow, or in rare moments of contemplative thought, they have their doubts as to whether naturalism is adequate, but so long as they dally with the thought that natural law is supreme, they will unconsciously tend to conform their life to its demands. When we let the temptations of physical pleasure and indulgence possess us we are worshipping at the shrine of naturalism, even if our names are written on the rolls of the most orthodox church in town. When a woman in order to make herself attractive bedecks herself in costly apparel, forgetful of the needs of her family, or her own soul life, forgetful of sweat shops and child labor and unpaid sewing women; when a man pushes his business success at the expense of under-paid labor, ruined competitors, deceived customers; when ambitious kings and emperors plunge their nations into a heartless war of aggression, regardless of starving, wounded, dying men, women and children, they are but following the natural jungle law of tooth and nail and are nature worshippers pure and simple.

The natural type of life is ambitious, energetic, selfish and unsympathetic, except with

one's family or immediate friends. It makes our civilization materialistic, efficient, restless, extravagant, harsh and cruel, and grossly unequal in the distribution of its benefits.

This is no suitable basis for a religion, for the very essential of a religious faith is a sense of dependence on an outside power that independently of ourselves is making for righteousness, and religion is the intuitive response to that power in an effort to propitiate it and to approach towards it.

Neither is the idealistic explanation of the problem of human life a satisfactory basis for a religious faith. It leaves too much to the individual fancy and inclination; it is too dependent on youth and health and prosperity; it deals too much with the trivialities of dress and decorum; and ignores the more important things of moral conduct and spiritual discipline. It imposes no disagreeable duties and quickly dissipates itself in faultfinding egotism. Intellectual idealism is at its best in youth and vigor, but sooner or later will come the tired days, the discouragement of opposing interests and failing health; then energy and action will lag, one will inevitably begin to appropriate and enjoy, and idealism will have been forgotten or have lapsed into mere culture and enjoyment.

In intellectual idealism there is no power making for righteousness, or at most if there

be a current in the cosmic process that is tending towards the ideal, it is doing so entirely independent of humanity and its interests. Even if idealism recognizes a beneficent life process, it removes it so far behind a pitiless determinism that there can be little hope of appeal to it as a life motive. The only help such a belief can be to a man is the very negative help that may be his to the extent that he can intellectually discern its trend and succeed in forcing his life to coincide with it; and even then all the reward that can be his will be the consciousness that through his efforts the race life has been lifted an infinitesimal increment nearer the ideal. He may have the satisfaction of thinking that he is living in harmony with the ideal, but there can be no more personal and satisfying reward, no fellowship, no worship.

On the other hand the spiritual explanation by supplying a faith in two levels of conscious existence, a natural and a spiritual, and over all a Sovereign God who is infinite, holy and loving, who is, and who ever has been, working out a moral purpose that most intimately concerns the individual happiness and welfare, calls into play the strongest activities of a man's nature, and tends to make the quest of the spiritual life the most energetic and worth while of all life's adventures. According to the spiritual faith, the continuance of man's enthusiasm and effort

is not wholly dependent on his own strength of body or mentality, but is supplied and is reënforced by all the universal forces of the Spiritual Realm operating within him and ever coöperating with his ever clearing ideals of spiritual faith, duty and service, for his advancement into the higher realm of the spirit.

It is the glory of the spiritual solution of the problem of human life that it provides an outside aid that is of itself working for the redemption and advancement of humanity. The spiritual solution not only lifts up a vision of a higher life for the soul, with all its promises of ineffable harmonies, its fellowships of perfect affinity, its intimacies of perfect knowledge, but it also energizes the advance into those spiritual relations. So long as one is dependent for courage and hope for participation in a higher or more ideal life solely on his own powers of discernment, his own self-control, his own persistence of effort, and his own strength, so long has one reason for discouragement, and the horrors of ultimate failure will ever haunt his steps; but if the forces of the higher spiritual life are coördinating for his advancement then there is assurance that his spiritual aspirations are well grounded and will ultimately be victorious over the lower animal desires of the natural life. His confidence and courage are based not on his own failing strength, but on

the beneficent and transcendent forces of the Spiritual Realm.

From what has been said it must be clear to all that when one bases the conduct of his life strictly on a naturalistic basis, that it will be, nay must be, selfish, worldly wise, exciting, and in the end, a disheartening failure. If one honestly bases the conduct of his life on an intellectual ideal there will be the temporary enthusiasm, the noble effort of youth, but it will almost certainly be followed by more or less conformity to convention, by a selfish withdrawal into a life of culture, by increasing narrowness and egotism, and finally by a sense of defeat and discouragement.

On the contrary those that build on a spiritual foundation have good ground for confidence that their labor will not be in vain because it rests "in the Lord." The experiences of life will more and more confirm their faith that above all and ahead of all is a higher life of the spirit, whose glory the mind of man has never yet measured and whose upward progress appears to have no end. Those who have trusted in their natural powers, or in the changing ideals of their poor minds, as the end of life draws near, will see a gross darkness shutting down on a life of disappointment and failure; but to him who has trusted in a spiritual overworld, and who has sought to live a life of

service according to the spiritual law of love, and who has had faith in the redeeming power of the Sovereign God of this spiritual overworld of love, the end of the earthly life will come as a setting sun, that hints not of failure and oblivion, but that promises the glorious coming of a new and a better day.

In the next sermon I shall try to show how the teachings of Jesus established once and for all time this spiritual solution of the problem of human life. I will show that the proclamation of the Good News of a Spiritual Realm was the chief concern of Jesus during all his earthly ministry, and by his dying commission was bequeathed to all his disciples. Nothing else should take precedence of it, neither fellowship, nor social service, nor ethical teaching. The paramount duty of the Christian Church is to proclaim the evangelistic message of the Master; which is: the assertion of the reality of a Spiritual Realm, and the way through faith and trust and love into its timeless life.

II

Jesus' Solution of the Problem of Human Life

(Nicodemus) "You speak of the Kingdom of God, what do you mean by it?" Jesus replied: "The Kingdom of God, or the Spiritual Realm, is an independent order of reality that is higher than the natural order, and cannot be fully understood except by one who is born from above." Nicodemus said: "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered: "It is not a matter of physical birth; but nevertheless I repeat what I said, except one be born of Spiritual Vitality he cannot advance into the Spiritual Realm. That which is born of the natural flesh is flesh of course; but that which is born of Spiritual Vitality is Spirit."—"THE GOOD NEWS OF A SPIRITUAL REALM."

"But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. . . . But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."—PAUL OF TARSUS.

"For the first time in history there appeared on earth One who absolutely trusted the Unseen, who had utter confidence that Love was at the heart of all things, utter confidence also in the Absolute Power of that Absolute Love and in the liberty of that Love to help Him."—PRINCIPAL D. S. CAIRNS.

II

Jesus' Solution of the Problem of Human Life

JESUS approached the problem of Human Life from the Jewish point of view. To the Jews three things appeared to be of prime importance: the infinite personality and authority of Jehovah, the duties in the line of worship and daily living that human beings owed to this Sovereign Jehovah, and third, the promised coming of the Messiah to establish a Messianic Kingdom.

Jesus accepted in a general way these common Jewish religious ideas and made them the basis of his system of thought, but he so far transformed them by correcting misapprehensions, and by adding new depths of meaning that to the Jews his teachings seemed actually antagonistic.

To the common conception of Jehovah as the creator and ruler of a physical universe, he added a revelation that showed him to be the beneficent and paternal sovereign of a higher realm of the spirit that infinitely tran-

scended the natural universe; he taught them that if they were ever to know God aright they must think of him, not so much as Jehovah the Almighty, as the Heavenly Father in a Kingdom of Love.

The old Jewish conceptions of the relations that existed between humanity and God and the duties that man owed to God had become crystallized into elaborate codes of ceremonial law and moral precepts. Jesus brushed these all aside and taught that all that was essential in the Law and the Prophets was summed up in the two commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

But by far the most important contribution that Jesus made to the current religious ideas of the Jews was his teaching as to the real nature of the Messianic Kingdom. He did not call it the Messianic Kingdom, he called it the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven; and the greatest part of his ministry was devoted to explaining what it was, and how humanity could enter into it, and live in the vitality of it.

If we are to understand what Jesus thought about the Problem of Human Life we must study his teachings about all of these things,

but it is especially important that we understand his teachings about the Kingdom of God, for that was the most important thing that he had to teach and to reveal, and it lies at the basis of all the rest. He refers to the Kingdom hundreds of different times; in fact, he refers to it more than to all other subjects put together.

Even the Prophets of old, who had foretold his coming, made the Kingdom the outstanding feature of their prophecies, and the angelic presence in the vision of the annunciation told Mary: "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his Kingdom there shall be no end."

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all refer to the mission of Jesus, using different expressions to be sure, but all saying the same thing: "He came to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom."

Jesus himself began his preaching ministry by proclaiming that the Kingdom of God was at hand. In the very first interview of which we have any record, when Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, the conversation opens by Nicodemus' asking Jesus what he means by the Kingdom of God. When Jesus sent out the twelve and the seventy, he told them that they were to preach everywhere the Gospel of the Kingdom. And after his resurrection when

the time came to give his great and final commission he told his disciples, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel," the Good News of the Kingdom.

His constant references to the Kingdom in his teachings resulted in people calling him the King of the Jews, and when Pilate began to examine him, his first question was, "Are you the King of the Jews?" and the last thing that caught the eyes of the multitude at the crucifixion was the sign high above that read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

Jesus certainly felt it to be his supreme mission in life to reveal and to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God, and we shall make no mistake if we study carefully what Jesus said about it.

In the beginning let us say that probably no other teaching of Jesus has been so persistently misunderstood as his teaching concerning the nature of the Kingdom of God, and what is more, it is still being misunderstood by many of the foremost preachers and teachers of Christianity. As a preliminary to considering what he did mean, let us first review some of the erroneous meanings that have been held.

The misunderstanding began even before the birth of Jesus. The Prophets of old had foretold the coming of the Messiah, who was to be the descendant of David, who should receive

the Kingdom of his father David, and of his sway there should be no end. The Jews, because of their political troubles and of the vicissitudes of their national life had construed this to mean that when the Messiah came that he would restore their national standing and liberties, and give them their rightful place before the nations as the chosen people of God, to whom others would turn for religious light and leadership. This erroneous expectation was so deeply rooted in their national consciousness that they came to value their idea of the Messianic Kingdom more than they valued the personality of the Messiah; and when it came to a choice of either giving up their mistaken notion of the Messianic Kingdom, or of giving up the Messiah, they chose to crucify the Lord and cried out in tumult, "His blood be on us and on our children."

But Jesus' teaching concerning the Kingdom was not only misunderstood by his enemies; it was misunderstood by his disciples and friends. In spite of his reiterated teachings his disciples continued to think that he must mean by "the Kingdom" a world kingdom under Messianic control. On his way to Jerusalem for his final rejection and crucifixion two of his disciples asked for places of honor when he should come into his kingdom; when the crowd thought that he was about to assume

his Messianic throne they thronged about him and gave him imperial welcome to the city; in the final hour before the ascension, the disciples asked him, "Will you at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?" and for years after, his disciples looked for his second coming to establish his world kingdom.

After his ascension the true spiritual meaning of his Kingdom began to dawn on the minds of a few of his disciples, but only a few. The disciple John, and later John the Presbyter, who wrote the Epistles of John, began to understand, and then Paul with his master mind entered still deeper into the Master's meaning. But when Paul became engrossed in his life-work of defending Christianity against Judaism and against Greek philosophy, and when he became more than busy meeting the emergencies and the difficulties incident to establishing a new church organization, he let doctrine and order monopolize his thought to such an extent that his system of thought was turned from its simple emphasis on the higher spiritual life to an elaboration of dogma and ecclesiastical polity.

In the years and centuries that followed, the evolution of church and doctrine showed all too plainly that the leaders of the Christian Church had come to understand Jesus' words in regard to the Kingdom of God to mean

the organized Church, to whose headship Jesus would return in a visible second coming. In the course of time the Pope, the Vicar of Christ, claimed imperial honor and authority as the head of the Kingdom of God on earth. To their minds the organization of believers constituted the kingdom.

In time the inadequacy of this conception began to be felt, and under the leadership of Wyclif, Huss, Luther, and other Protestant leaders another conception asserted itself. Having substituted the authority of the Bible for the authority of the Pope, they no longer felt that the organized Church was the kingdom, but held that the Kingdom of God on earth was the whole body of believers in the true doctrine as revealed in the Bible. This has gone on until our own day when the emphasis has very largely passed from creeds and doctrines to the spirit of life, and with this change the Kingdom of God has come to mean commonly the invisible order of society upon earth that is moved by Christian motives or the spirit of Christ, *i. e.*, it is generally supposed to be that ideal state of society where love reigns and towards which the evolution of society is tending.

All of these conceptions are erroneous and entirely misunderstand the teaching of Jesus. The thing to be noted in all these conceptions

of the Kingdom of God is the presence of one common element of error; they all make the Kingdom of God to consist of some state of society here on earth as distinct from heaven, or the Spiritual Realm.

D. S. Cairn in a recent book writes: "The Kingdom of God is a new spiritual society;" "a new order of humanity;" "a great spiritual structure to be built up as men have built up a civilization;" "a nascent commonwealth of redeemed humanity." These expressions are quite typical of many other modern writers. Rauschenbusch writes: "The Kingdom of God is still a collective conception, involving the whole life of man. It is not a matter of saving human atoms, but of saving the social organism, . . . of transforming the life on earth into the harmony of heaven." Peabody writes: "The Kingdom of God . . . It was to be a social regeneration." Dr. Lyman says, "It is the working out of the Kingdom of God on earth." By saying this he makes the meaning of the Kingdom of God on earth the same as a state of society on earth in which God's will is done. This is the mistake. The Kingdom of God is the Spiritual Realm, and it is not any state of society upon earth, however ideal it may be. It is true that the Christian purpose is not less than the getting of God's will done upon earth, but it is also a great deal more; namely, it is so

to live that the soul may transcend this natural life and advance into the Spiritual Realm. In order to do this one must live a life that is controlled by Christ's spirit of love, and one result of such a love-controlled life will be the getting of God's will done among men, so that they and every one may enjoy a richer and a more abundant life and so that there may be a more favorable environment for living such a love-controlled life. But the resulting state of society will not be the Kingdom of God upon earth, for the Kingdom of God is the Spiritual Realm. I wish that there might be some acceptable term agreed upon for this ideal state of earthly society, so that there might not be this continuing confusion of thought by using the same term, Kingdom of God, for both an ideal state of society and for the Spiritual Realm.

Jesus' meaning seems clear enough if we are able to rid ourselves of these old material conceptions. He says distinctly that his Kingdom is not of this world and that it can only be apprehended within a man. This can mean only one thing; it can only mean that there is a higher order of reality than the familiar physical world about us that we know by sense perception, an order that we can "sense" and know only by the inner consciousness.

Jesus says distinctly: " . . . my kingdom

is not of this world. If it were my men would fight for me and I would not be delivered to the Jews. No, my kingdom is independent of this natural order. . . . I have come into this world for this purpose and for this purpose only, to bear witness of the only kingdom of true reality."[1]

According to Jesus the Spiritual Realm is independent of temporal and spatial considerations, but we can truly say, nevertheless, it is here and now and can be apprehended within by the spiritual faculties. The thought of this is so new and strange that it is no wonder that Nicodemus exclaimed: "How can this be possible!" Jesus admitted to him the difficulty of comprehending its full meaning, he admitted that it was impossible for a human being, who belongs to a lower order, to discover the secrets of a higher order, but claimed for himself the right to testify to it inasmuch as he had come down from the higher Spiritual Realm; and he insisted that what he taught about the Kingdom of God was true.

Even his favorite disciples failed to understand his meaning and drew from Jesus more than once a weary exclamation: "Are you too without penetration?"

It is very difficult for us in this scientific age when we so commonly think that everything

[1] "The Good News of a Spiritual Realm," p. 254.

that is real must exist in a universe of time and space, and must be subject to cause and effect, and that we can measure and weigh, to comprehend what Jesus means by the independent reality of a Spiritual Realm.

Even Saint Augustine, who is counted one of the world's greatest thinkers, had extreme difficulty in forming a conception of spiritual existence and he looked upon this inability as the sole cause of his earlier errors of thought. In his "Confessions" he refers to it frequently. He says: "Of what was meant by a spiritual substance I could not (at first) form even a faint and shadowy notion." "So slow of heart was I . . . that whatsoever was not extended in space or diffused through it, I supposed to have no existence at all."

While we admit the difficulty of thinking in spiritual terms, to one who is unaccustomed to it, the age-long history of religion and mysticism proves conclusively that devout effort makes it possible. The conception of a Spiritual Realm can be made to be not only reasonable, but the only and necessary explanation of the many and perplexing problems of human life. Dr. Rudolf Eucken, the ablest thinker of today, uses the line of philosophic necessity to prove its reality; Dr. Keyser in his book, "Science and Religion," uses the mathematical line of reasoning based on the well-known proc-

ess of limits; still another scholar comes to the same conclusion by following an accepted line of biological reasoning.

But I think that for most of us Jesus' meaning will be sufficiently clear if we think about it in connection with some of the different levels of life that we see in nature about us. We see inorganic material and crystalline material; we see crystalline material and vegetable life; we see vegetable life and animal life; we see animal life and our own intellectual life. We can easily understand all of these to be different levels of life acting within the same physical realm. But when we come to think of the two separate life processes, the physical and the spiritual, that are going on within us, they cannot be so easily explained. We can understand physical growth to be a natural process, but we cannot so understand spiritual growth.

The spiritual life demands a different kind of an environment. As long as we try to crowd all of the ethical and moral and spiritual happenings into the same realm that suffices for the explanations of physical happenings there is endless confusion of thoughts and misunderstanding; but when we explain physical phenomena by physical laws operating in a material universe, and explain the phenomena that have to do with the spiritual forces of love, faith, duty where they belong in an independ-

ent and higher domain of the spirit, then we simplify and make intelligible the teachings of Jesus.

Jesus gives comparatively little time to asserting the existence of the Spiritual Realm, but devotes a great deal of time and care in conversation with his disciples, in answering the questions of his enemies, and in talks with those he meets by the way, to making clear the nature of the Kingdom and their relation to it.

He seems to avoid abstract and metaphysical terms but delights in figures of speech and in parables. He says over and over again: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto," and then he likens it to seed, to yeast, to hid treasure, to wages, reward, a fishing net, a shepherd's care, paternal love, and many other different figures, but all of them point to an overworld of love that is hovering just within reach of humanity.

Both Jesus and John the Baptist spoke of "the coming of the Kingdom," and of the Kingdom as "drawing near." In the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he said: "Thy Kingdom come." This thought of the Kingdom drawing near has meant to many that Jesus had in mind a visible second coming when he would assume the Kingship of his disciples in a Messianic reign. This was especially true during the first millennium. In later years and especially among the intellectual idealists

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of our own day, the coming of the Kingdom means the gradual increase of the Christ spirit in human society, a gradual approach towards that ideal state of human society in which God's will will be done among men.

It seems to me that this is not at all what Jesus had in mind when he taught men to pray: "Thy Kingdom come." It seems to be much more in accord with his other teachings which are uniformly spiritual to understand the words to mean that the Spiritual Realm being non-spatial and non-temporal is all about us all of the time as a kind of overworld of love, and yet in a sense it is a long way off to those whose faculties for apprehending it are dull and useless. They have eyes to see and see not; they have ears to hear and hear not; and their hearts are too heavy to understand. But as human beings begin to take note of spiritual things, there awakens in the heart a desire to understand, the spiritual faculties are quickened, and in a true sense the Spiritual Realm draws near to them. It is when we hunger and thirst for righteousness, for love and sympathy, and pray in spirit and in truth, "Thy Kingdom come," that the shadows and the barriers that remove the Spiritual Realm far from us dissolve away and we realize that the Kingdom is drawing near within us. And so to this materialistic world with all its selfish, ambitious people and

nations, the Kingdom seems far, far away; but as peoples and nations come to heed the messages of Jesus and begin to cherish the Love Idea, then does the Kingdom of God, the Spiritual Realm, draw near.

It will not come as we put on a garment, by gradually acquiring intellectual culture; it will not come as society gradually develops under an increasing ethical organization and control. No, not that; when it comes it will come silently to individuals, as one by one they open their hearts, and as the spiritual faculties are quickened, to welcome and to receive it.

We cannot test the nearness of the Spiritual Realm by statistics and observations, but nevertheless we can be conscious of it, we can in a true sense taste and see that God is very near. We can yield ourselves to spiritual influences; we can launch out into the depths of his providential care; we can love and trust God with all our mind and heart and strength, and we can love our neighbors; we can loyally keep his commandments and try to have our lives conform to the spiritual law of love; and then he has promised us, we shall know.

The second thing for us to notice is this: Jesus asserted that the spiritual law of love was stronger than any natural law, and he proved it by doing in a spirit of love greater works than any man had ever done before. He healed

the sick, he cured the lame, opened the eyes of the blind, restored the insane and even raised the dead to life again. He satisfied the hunger of thousands with a few loaves of bread; he restrained the violence of angry men; and even the winds and the waves obeyed him. Yet with all his supernatural power he was willing to suffer the death of his own body on the cross, in order that he might show how possible it was for love to triumph over death; and then by repeated appearances after the death of the body he proved beyond question, to the heart of faith, the reality of the spiritual life here and now and its continuance after the death of the body.

He asserted that he did not do these things in his own natural strength, but that he did them in the power that was given him from God who was Sovereign of the Spiritual Realm and who had sent him to do these very things. Then he asserted that any of his disciples could do even greater things than these if they trusted in the same spiritual forces that he trusted in. There was no equivocation in this assertion. He said plainly and repeated it many times, "Whatsoever ye ask in my name," that is, with confidence in the supreme power of the spiritual force of love, "that ye shall receive." "Verily, verily I say unto you he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and

greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father." "If ye shall ask anything in my name," that is, in the spirit of love, "that will I do." This was not an arbitrary gift of power, but was an assertion that was based on conforming to certain laws, and these laws were the spiritual laws of faith and love that he knew to be more powerful than the natural laws with which they would conflict and which they would overcome.

The third thing for us to notice is the most important of all, as it constitutes the Good News of the Kingdom that Jesus came to proclaim. The Good News that Jesus brought is this: There is an overworld of Love, on the border of which humanity stands, and there is a way by which human beings may pass over the border into this higher realm of the spirit. This message of hope comes into a world of strife, and labor, and sickness, and hunger of heart, with the Good News of a way of advance into the calm and peace of a realm where love and righteousness and rest are ever present.

The magnitude of this Good News is only realized when we call to mind the wholly unsatisfactory character of the earthly life. We enter into the natural life with great anticipations, but find it replete with disappointment and failure. From earliest days until the end

comes we find ourselves in the midst of unsympathetic natural laws that force us into a struggle for existence that we know must end in ultimate failure and decay and death. The more the problem of human life is studied from a scientific or natural standpoint, the more does it become a mystery of suffering, sin and defeat. Within there is the constant antagonism of natural desires, appetites and passions, that are in direct conflict with certain spiritual aspirations and visions that seem too good to be true and almost too impossible ever to be realized.

Into the dark shadows of this mortal life Jesus comes to proclaim the Good News of a higher Spiritual Realm and a way of advance into it. He tells men that this way of advance is strait and narrow but whosoever desires may enter. He tells them of the difficulties of the transition, but also tells them of the Heavenly Father's sympathy and coöperation; he tells them that all the forces of this higher Spiritual Realm will coördinate for successful progress in it, of all those who are ready to meet the conditions.

The new spiritual life is not something that is to come as a continuation of the natural life after death, but is a present quickening and beginning of a higher type of life within the soul here and now. He that would make the

quest for the spiritual life must be born again, and this time not of the flesh but of the spirit. The new life cannot come from the will of man, nor from intellectual culture, nor from the gradual process of natural evolution, nor alone from a father's or mother's dear love; it can only come when there is present a real desire for a better and more unselfish life, a willingness to believe and trust and obey; when the new spiritual birth comes it will result from the meeting together of human aspiration and divine grace; it will come from the fecundating power of Divine Love Vitality acting on a human heart that is already receptive with a great and loving desire for the higher life of the spirit.

"To as many as received him, to them he gave power to become Sons of God, even to them that believed on his name; which are born not of blood, nor the will of the flesh, nor of the will of men, but of God." [1]

Many sincere and earnest students of Jesus' words have difficulty in "visualizing" the independent reality of a spiritual life; to them it seems to involve a kind of dualism that is contrary to the monist basis of modern science. It appears to them that a more reasonable interpretation is to think that Jesus was presenting certain spiritual ideals of conduct, that if

[1] "The Good News of a Spiritual Realm," pp. 17, 47, 116.

accepted and followed would have cultural value in the development of character. To them the Christian life is a process of spiritualizing the natural life.

A careful study of the teaching of Jesus shows that this view is entirely untenable. Jesus had in mind not a process of spiritual culture for the old life, but the creation of a new and independent life of the spirit. It will not be living the old natural life in an ideal way; it will be "a new life in Christ Jesus." The true center of consciousness is to be elevated into a new level of existence where love, reverence, and unity reign, and where selfishness, competition, envy, hate will be left far below.

Then Jesus teaches that the new spiritual birth will be sustained by suitable spiritual food as it is written: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Jesus said: "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give will never thirst." "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." "The words that I speak to you," that is, the spiritual influences that emanate from Divine Love, "they are spirit, they are life." "Your fathers ate of the manna in the desert and are dead, but they that eat of the bread that I can give shall never die."

If we believe in Jesus, and that means to believe in that which he taught, namely: in the supremacy of the spiritual law of love, and if we sincerely trust in the sustaining power of the Divine Love Vitality, and if we humbly and gratefully obey the spiritual influences as they come to us day by day from the throne of God, we shall grow, by his grace, in the spiritual life. The roots of our human nature that run back into the soil of the natural realm will loosen one by one and lose their strength; and the bonds that hold us to the spiritual will grow stronger with every passing year, until with the death of the body the soul will be free to live in its fullness the unfettered life of the Spiritual Realm.

Jesus does not belittle the difficulties of the transition and growth. He says: "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to eternal life and few there be that find it." He foretold that there would be conflict with the natural order, that the institution of a new order would necessarily mean conflict with the old. He said: "You are not of this world, even as I am not of this world." "If the world has hated me, even so will it hate you."

The interests of the higher spiritual life will often conflict with the natural appetites and the easier conditions of the world, and to live

the higher spiritual life successfully the lower must be subordinated to the aims of the higher. As long as we live in the natural environment there will be the need of incessant choice. For a time, that is, until the death of the natural body, the two modes of existence, the physical and the spiritual, must go along together and there is bound to be more or less friction.

It will be no easy task to establish and to develop such a genuine and independent spiritual life, and yet there can be no half way. Jesus urged his disciples to arouse life from its apathy and resolutely oppose the lower desires of the natural body that are inconsistent with, and antagonistic to, the aims of the higher. He said, "Ye cannot serve two masters." Sincerity, gratitude, loyalty, faith, love, all of them spiritual forces, must face and oppose and overcome selfishness, laziness, indulgence and lasciviousness.

The opposition is not ended with "joining the church." The new birth is but the beginning of a life and so long as the soul inhabits its natural body, so long must it expect to be obliged to make hourly choice between the natural and the spiritual, between the lower and the higher, between the evil and the good. Devoting one's self to the quest of the spiritual life does not create these oppositions, they are present in every natural life, but in the uncon-

secrated life the aspirations of the soul seem but evanescent visions that must fade away before the supposed necessities of the physical nature. It is not until the new birth that one realizes that the antagonism between the natural passions and the spiritual aspirations is a struggle for the life of a soul; that one realizes that the so-called necessities of the natural life are not necessary or essential, and realizes that the interests of the spirit are higher and paramount, that can be and will in the end be victoriously established. The old and natural life was a struggle for existence in the face of an unsympathetic law of survival, and its cycle was at best only one of growth, labor, a temporary enjoyment, followed by inevitable decay and death. But in the Spiritual Realm, into which the new-born soul has now entered, all the spiritual forces are coördinating for the triumphant and endless life of the good and the true. A human soul that is reborn of the spirit has already passed from the realm of time and natural death into the realm of the timeless spirit; for such a soul there can be no such a thing as failure, or actual death.

The slur that used to be cast at the Christian life, namely, that it was "other-worldly," has no point when we correctly understand it to be an adventure for a higher type of life. As Jesus calls us to it, it demands all that is heroic and

enduring; opposition and difficulties will be on every hand, "but they that be for us will be more than they that be against us" and we can meet them with confidence and zeal and serenity.

A man that is selfish is pitted against the world, with only his own wits and strength of body to help him, but the one who is trying to make the quest of the spiritual life, the unselfish life, is working not against others but with others; he is living in a realm where the interests and the welfare of the individual coincide with the interests of all. Yes, even more than that, if one's life is unselfish and love is the controlling motive, he will be living in harmony with the infinite,—he will have become an integral part of it—and therefore all the energy and vitality of the Spiritual Realm will be at his service to supply his every need and to reinforce and complete his work. There will be opposition, but it will be external to the soul, the opposition of natural desire, the desires of others, intrenched and vested interests, the opposition of evil in high places, enough surely to discourage any one except for Jesus' sympathy and help, and the fact that, "All things will be working together for good to them that love the Lord."

In spite of the difficulties and obstacles, Jesus insisted that there need be no down-heartedness

or discouragement. He told his disciples to rejoice if evil was spoken against them falsely, and to count themselves blessed when persecuted. They were not to be passive and quiescent, they were to be virile, active, joyous and useful; and no matter how much the opposition increased, they were to be only the more kind-hearted and forgiving. He said, "Be of good courage, I have overcome the world." "My grace is sufficient."

Jesus gave them no complicated rules or instructions. He summed up all commandments into two, which are really one. "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy mind and heart and strength, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Love was the supreme characteristic of his Kingdom, love was the law of the Spiritual Realm, and love was to be the sole rule of their lives. Jesus insisted that nothing was to come before love; one was to forsake native land, and home, and father or mother, and brethren and business, if they ever conflicted with love and spiritual faith. The right hand, the sight of the eye, even life itself were never to be valued more than deeds of loving kindness; and there must be no limit to the spirit of forgiveness. The old maxims for moral conduct were set aside. He said, "But I say unto you, love your enemies, do good to them that persecute you." And Jesus set the highest ex-

ample of self-sacrificing love by giving himself a ransom for the sin of the world.

In the mind of Jesus, Love was the universal spiritual energy and vitality. Love was to radiate from the Heavenly Father into the souls of those that made choice of the spiritual to lift them up into the higher life of the spirit; and Love was to radiate from each redeemed soul for the spiritualization of others.

As the spiritual life develops under love-control, it will express itself in deeds of loving kindness. The love-controlled life will interest itself unselfishly in the good of others by seeking the betterment of individual and social conditions; and by proclaiming and explaining the Good News of the Spiritual Realm. The love-controlled life will go into all the world making disciples among all nations.

But the goal for such a love-controlled life will not be the establishment on earth of ideal social conditions, nor the measure of its success the extent of social betterment, neither will it be the successful living up to one's spiritual ideals. It will be something far higher than that and far more difficult of attainment; the goal of the Christian life is entrance into the Spiritual Realm. And the hope of it, the vision of it, which the creative energy of the spirit is ever unfolding is that which will buoy one up for the difficulties of the quest. One believes

that ahead of him are new beauties and new delights that are beyond compare, that one will be advancing from glory into glory, beyond all that the mind and heart of man can think or imagine.

"Why should I shrink at pain or woe,
Or feel at death dismay,
I've Canaan's goodly land in view,
And realms of endless day."

Jesus, by his earthly life and teachings, emphasized four things in relation to the problem of human life.

First, He revealed all that we know about the nature of God. He taught that God was love, and that while he was Sovereign of the Spiritual Realm, he could best be understood by men as their Heavenly Father. In an infinitely loving purpose, God revealed himself to humanity in Jesus of Nazareth. In other words, Jesus was the incarnation of the Heavenly Father's love for the world of men. Jesus was sent into the world not to judge the world, but that the world through him might be tested and saved. And God will continue to reveal himself to the world in the work of the Holy Spirit, who is the Divine Love Vitality that is forever generating and energizing the spiritual life of those who believe in him.

Second, Jesus revealed the fact that there were two levels of reality, the material universe of nature with which we are familiar, and a Spiritual Realm or overworld, whose characteristic is its law of love.

Third, Jesus asserted that the spiritual law of love was operative not only in the Spiritual Realm but also in the world of nature as well, and that, when it was appealed to in humble and devout and loving faith, it was supreme over all natural laws.

Fourth, Jesus revealed the way by which human beings could transcend nature and advance into the Spiritual Realm. This way of salvation was the Gospel, the Good News, which Jesus brought to earth. This summons the followers of Jesus to a quest for the spiritual life; it calls for a sincere belief in the spiritual law of love, a whole-hearted trust in it, and a humble and grateful obedience to its demands.

Jesus calls on all men everywhere to believe in the goodness of God, to believe in the reality of a Spiritual Realm, to have faith in the supremacy of the spiritual law of love, and to be willing to follow the way of salvation into the spiritual overworld of love. He calls upon all men everywhere to repent of evil, and to undertake the quest for a higher life of the spirit along the way of love which he has revealed to

them. He urges them to be willing to make any sacrifice, to seek it as they would for a hidden treasure, and promises to those who are willing to forsake all else for the sake of this quest a hundredfold in this life and, in the age to come, eternal life.

Men set out on a quest for the Antarctic pole with great publicity and acclaim; they endure the most extreme hardships and danger, and when they return they are proclaimed as heroes; they are flattered and fêted and decorated. Men must set out on the quest for the Spiritual Realm in obscurity and humility, and they will often be opposed and laughed at and maligned; but with faith and trust and humble obedience they must press on towards the mark of the high calling. The quest for the Spiritual Realm calls for the highest courage and heroism, for it will be beset with difficulties and dangers; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, will all conspire to distract attention, to discourage and to overcome; but, if the loving purpose to seek first the Kingdom of God is held firmly all the necessities of the physical life will be forthcoming, and within the soul there will be increasing calm and peace, and the fires of faith and love will burn brightly and steadily.

And when the journey of life is over and the quest is ended, amid the rejoicing of the Angels

in Heaven over the one more who has reached the goal and entered into the fullness of Life, there will be heard the voice of the One who taught men the way and called them to the quest, saying: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

III

How to Live as Jesus Taught

"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."—JESUS OF NAZARETH.

"It is the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, that I proclaim; I am only your servant for Jesus' sake. For God who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' has shone within my heart, so that even I might illumine men with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, that was radiant in the face of the Messiah. But I bring this treasure to you in an earthen vessel, that it may be evident that its transcending power belongs to God and not to myself."

—PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS.

"Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts can find no rest until they rest in Thee."—ST. AUGUSTINE.

"This is the power or virtue of love, that it maketh thee to be like unto that which thou lovest."

—ST. BERNARD.

"O my sisters! who can describe the point to which a soul, where our Lord dwells in so special a manner, neglects her own ease? . . . When she possesses the ceaseless companionship of her bridegroom, how could she think of herself? Her only thought is to please Him, and to seek out ways in which she may show Him her love. It is to this point, my daughters, that orison tends; and, in the design of God, this spiritual marriage is destined to no other purpose but to the incessant production of work, work. . . . To give to our Lord a perfect hospitality, Martha and Mary must combine."—ST. TERESA.

III

How to Live as Jesus Taught

THE question is often asked: What is the Christian life? Some say that it is living up to one's spiritual ideals. This may be true, but it is not a satisfactory answer because it is too indefinite. A better answer is: The Christian life is a life that is lived in accordance with the teachings of Jesus; and to find out more particularly what it is, one must study the teachings of Jesus.

In a long conversation which Jesus had with his disciples about this very question, he summed up his teaching in the words that are recorded in Matthew vi. 33: "But as for you, my disciples, seek first the Spiritual Realm and its Law of Love, and all these necessary things will be forthcoming." [1]

In this verse there are four important elements. First, there is an assertion of the existence of a Spiritual Realm as separate from, and more to be valued than, the world of nature. Second, there is the assertion that the spiritual Law of Love is of higher potency than any

[1] "The Good News of a Spiritual Realm," p. 80.

natural law. Third, there is the earnest admonition to his disciples to make the quest for this Spiritual Realm and its Law of Love their first concern. Fourth, there is the solemn assurance that if they will make the quest for the Spiritual Realm their first concern, that all the necessary things for physical and natural well-being will be supplied.

Involved in this verse also as a logical inference is the assertion, which Jesus makes more plainly elsewhere, that there is a Way along which this quest for the spiritual life can be successfully prosecuted. Jesus asserts that there is a way to live so that one can transcend this natural life and advance into the Spiritual Realm. The Way is this, he said, you must believe in the spiritual law of love and make it the controlling principle of your life. There is a depth of meaning in this word "*Pisteuo*," which our English Bible translates, believe. It means not only an intellectual belief, but an emotional trust, and a willing or volitional obedience. We are to have faith in the law of love as a guiding principle for our lives; we are to trust the Divine Love Vitality to energize a spiritual life process within us, to protect us from harm, and to supply the necessary things of the natural life; then we are ever to obey the spiritual influences that come from the Sovereign of

the Spiritual Realm, who is our Heavenly Father.

To this quest for advancement into the Spiritual Realm Jesus is ever calling humanity. Abraham heard it in the call to forsake his fatherland, and to go out he knew not whither. The prophets of old heard the call and voiced the longing of their times for its realization in the coming of a Messiah. And all down the ages in spite of the distraction of this mortal life, the soul hears the call in an aspiration for a higher and a nobler life.

When Jesus was asked if many were to be saved, he said, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to eternal life, and few there be that find it." Some are simply indifferent to the call, some lack courage or confidence, some are unwilling to pay the price. But there are always some in whom the desire has taken root deep enough, who are willing to take the first step in faith, that is, to desire to believe. Then the Divine Love Vitality can begin his gracious work, and he will begin it, and what is of more importance, will see it through to a finish. These are born again, not by any natural process, but by the Will of God and the vitalizing power of the Holy Spirit. Now they are ready to begin the quest for the Spiritual Realm, and, by God's grace, so long as they continue to believe,

and to trust and to obey, they will have passed from the realm of natural death into the timeless life of the Spiritual Realm.

The design of this sermon is to bring to your attention certain results of the study of the human mind and its religious consciousness, that I think will be of help to any one that is trying, or will try, to live as Jesus taught men to live.

To those who are sincerely desirous of living a Christian life, this sermon is offered as a help to a more intelligent effort, and as a ground for more confidence that the effort will be surely successful. If the sermon awakens a deeper interest in the souls of some who have not as yet made the great decision, or, if God grants it, brings some to a present decision to begin the Christian life to-day, it will be a very deep satisfaction to the preacher.

The old and conventional conception of the Christian life was that if one believed Jesus to be very God, repented of sin, was baptized, and joined the church, through God's grace his past sins would be forgiven, he would be helped to live a better life in the present, and after death would pass into a place called heaven. This is all right if rightly understood, but unfortunately it has all too commonly lost its meaning, and, to-day, to become a Christian, for most people, simply means

joining a church and leading a respectable life.

This is all wrong and unworthy. To live as Jesus taught men to live means something far more active and distinctive. It means turning the back on the old worldly life and setting out with courage and determination on a life-long quest for the spiritual life. It calls for a new control; it calls for a different life process. The natural law of self-assertion and self-preservation is to be set aside and ignored, and the spiritual law of love is to have right of way.

In the first place one must learn to distinguish in the world of nature two classes of interactions that are of vital importance. The first class of these interactions tends to division and disintegration, and the second class tends towards unity and synthetic results. It should be the duty of every one that is seeking to live a spiritual life to keep this distinction in mind. One should make it the rule of his life always to ally his will with the anabolic or creative forces, and to shun as he would evil the katabolic or disintegrating forces that are forever tending to break down health, growth and peace of mind. In fact one good definition of sin can be expressed in these terms: Sin is the conscious repudiation by the will of the creative and spiritual forces, and the alli-

ance of the will with the natural and disintegrating forces. Sin is the conscious checking of spiritual growth.

All animal life and the lower orders of humanity are practically creatures of impulse. As humanity rises in the scale of worth they more and more give attention to the suggestions of the mind and seek to control impulse by reason. In fact the secret of virile, strong character lies in its ability to see clearly, think wisely, and act promptly and definitely according to some self-determined motive. This is also the prerequisite for attaining spiritual growth, the self-determined motive being the determination to conform one's life to the spiritual law of love.

After deciding to live a Christian life according to this dominant motive, the first thing to be done is to so commit one's self to it that there will be no backing out; ally yourself with some Christian activity; let the whole world know that you have decided to be a Christian. There is a subtile danger in thinking that one can live the Christian life in secret. The temptations to conform to conventional rules and to relax effort are so ever present and so seductive that they are almost irresistible, unless one boldly and decidedly takes a public stand and commits himself unreservedly to the undertaking.

Jesus said: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father who is in heaven."

Thenceforth the task will be to ally the will constantly and steadily with the spiritual and creative forces. One must at once and permanently forsake companionship and alliance with worldly-minded people, and ever after associate and coöperate with those who are like minded in undertaking the spiritual quest in the spirit of Jesus. We shall need and must get all the advantage we can from the sympathy, encouragement and help that comes from community of interest. There should be a careful conservation of physical health and vigor, remembering that the body is to be the temple of the Divine Vitality. We should live temperately and in every way seek to protect the body except when the supreme law of love calls for its intelligent self-sacrifice.

Just as the gift of the intellect raised primitive man above the lower orders of animal life, so the later gift of spiritual intuition ought to, and will, raise Christians above worldly-minded men.

As worldly men and women we have probably lived more or less carelessly and selfishly, just as the natural impulses and desires swayed us. If we are now planning to live as Jesus taught, we must clearly understand that it involves a

radical change in the control. From now on we must learn to keep all thought and action in harmony with this one definite and self-determined motive, namely, that whatever we think or do shall conform to the spiritual law of love. From this time on there must be no more easy-going, hit or miss conduct. We must be thoughtful, industrious, and loving.

Men and women are usually controlled, or at least influenced by certain conventional standards, that are the composite result of the evolutionary process, of special environment, and of the accumulation of personal experience. When a choice of action is offered, most men will instinctively raise the questions: Will it pay? Will it save exertion? Will it give me power? And they will usually be governed accordingly.

With most women, the instinctive questions will be: Is it becoming? What will people say? Is it a bargain?

These are the natural and conventional standards of conduct. But when we come to live a spiritual life, our standards must be changed. We must learn to test conduct just as instinctively as of old, but now by spiritual standards. Men and women must both learn to test choice and action by new instinctive questions, such as these: Is it wise? Is it right? Is it kind? If we do this we shall be conscious of an increasing spiritual freedom; we shall be conscious

of a richer life and deeper joys. We shall be conscious of what Jesus said we should be conscious of, namely, a more abounding life, because for us, "The law of the spiritual life in Jesus Christ will have made us free from the law of sin and death; for to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

Now to keep our lives under the control of spiritual motives we shall find to be no easy task. We have for so long a time given in to natural desires and to selfish willfulness, that we shall find it has become almost second nature to do so, and to turn sharp around and attempt to control our lives by unselfish and spiritual motives we shall find to be well-nigh impossible.

We shall find to be true in our own lives what Paul found to be a fact in his own life, when he said: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see in my members another law warring against the law of the mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

We shall find that we are more under the control of our physical bodies than we ever imagined to be possible. We shall find that we are practically helpless to live the life we aspire to live without some outside aid. The question will come to our lips very early: "Have I to fight this battle alone? or is there

some help that I can depend on?" Very fortunately there is such help in the spiritual law of love. The law of love is not some beautiful ideal that dances away as one seeks it; the law of love is spiritual vitality; it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes it.

The spiritual life is not something that we can win for ourselves, it is not something that we can put on as we put on a garment; neither is it a Pullman car that will carry us to our destination without effort on our part. The spiritual life is a higher life of the soul, and if we are to attain unto it, it can only be by the grace of Him who is above all, and according to his Way. All we can do is to keep ourselves in a favorable attitude, in a receptive condition for the creative work of the Divine Love Vitality. We cannot even begin the spiritual life process, but the Divine Love can.

The spiritual life has its course, just as the natural life has. The spiritual course is first vision, and then desire and awakening, humiliation and discipline, enlightening and self-emptying, and then a blessed sense of union with the divine life.

Nevertheless we must ever remember that the spiritual life process demands our most earnest and sincere coöperation. We must sincerely *desire* to live the spiritual life; we must be willing to give up everything and face any-

thing to reach the goal. We must plan and work as though everything depended on us; and yet believing all the time (and what a satisfaction and a hope there is in the thought) that God's grace is sufficient and that he careth for us.

While we are aspiring to the spiritual life, and Love Vitality is energizing it within us we must ever remember that we are still subject to natural law and that our old habits of worldly indulgence are strong upon us, and must by God's grace be overcome. As we have already pointed out, our danger will lie in consciously or unconsciously allying our wills with the katabolic forces of nature. The danger will lie along three or four lines; and there we must ever be on our guard.

First. We are naturally impulsive, that is, we easily give way to any emotion, to impatience, anger, pride, selfishness and intemperance in every form.

Second. We are naturally lascivious, that is, we dally with sensual thoughts and desires.

Third. We are naturally lazy. We do not exert ourselves except under compulsion.

Fourth. We are naturally selfish. We think too much of our personal pleasures and comfort.

Let us look at these dangers dispassionately. First of all we note that back of each is some

good purpose. Back of laziness is a legitimate care for one's body that health and strength be conserved. Back of gluttony is nature's call to replenish constantly one's strength both physical and mental. Back of lasciviousness is nature's wise provision for the constant renewing of the race through reproduction. Back of selfishness is the power of personality by reason of which the human being is enabled to survive in the struggle for existence and to protect himself from all inferiority.

Another thing that we notice as we examine these dangers is this, that these natural impulses have an intensity and power over us that it is foolish to belittle. The fact of it is that these natural desires are so strong that no one can long resist them by the direct action of the will alone. The mind and the affections will protest, and the will may offer a temporary resistance, but sooner or later, unless some outside help comes to one's assistance, the natural desires will prevail and lead one into excess and sin and away from the spiritual life.

These temptations will come without a moment's warning and will not be ordered away; what are we to do, in what manner are we to discriminate between the good and the bad, in what manner are we to meet these natural desires so that we may with confidence expect to dominate them, and how will this outside aid

come to our assistance so that we may live a spiritually victorious life?

Well, we mustn't expect supernatural aid until we really need it; first of all we must learn to stop and think. We have already pointed out that the lower types of character act on impulse; we who are trying to live a higher and spiritual life must learn to stop and think before we act. This habit of attention enables one to bring to the reinforcement of the will the advantage of calm and considered judgment. In other words, habits of wise self-control can only come by habitually ceasing to act on impulse and by habitually taking sufficient time to think before acting.

To secure this advantage of self-control we must train our minds to habitually think good thoughts, and avoid as we would poison the lazy habit of letting the mind wander and dally with seductive thoughts. And thoughts of pride and envy, of anger and hatred, of gloom and dissatisfaction, are just as bad; they are katabolic; they all tempt one to act on impulse and to resist wise control.

We must habitually crowd out these wicked thoughts by good thinking. As Paul said: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, and lovely and of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be

any praise, think on these things." If we do this kind of thinking, then Paul's benediction will surely be ours: "And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Cherish visions of spiritual ideals, and let the heart feed on them, as though it was the bread of the new life.

It is a good thing to repeat to oneself phrases that relate to our new principle of conduct.

"I am a child of God."

"I am not under natural law, but under grace."

"Love is infinite and supreme."

"God is Love."

The point is to keep the mind busy with good thoughts that are creative in themselves, and leave it no time for idle day-dreams, or wicked and sensual thoughts, or morbid and discouraging thoughts, all of which tend to unrest and disease and disintegration.

Use all available time for quiet constructive thinking, seek to formulate reasons for believing that spiritual and loving conduct is wisest and best. Exercise memory by recalling all the good, the true and beautiful happenings of the day. Be on the lookout all the time for examples and ideals of nobility and goodness. Recall to mind the blessings in your own life,

the things that have made you happy and for which you are grateful. Take time every day to plan for the doing of little kindnesses and favors for those that are near, and especially for the poor, the sick and the despondent.

If one is in the habit of thinking good thoughts and acting promptly on their suggestion, then in times of sudden temptation from the natural desires, the will will more probably act in the right direction than it otherwise would. The habit of always doing the wise and the kind thing, as the mind suggests it, is of the utmost importance and should be exercised daily, exactly as we use gymnastics to strengthen the muscles.

Then there is another advantage to be gained by quiet contemplative thought and that is, that it trains one to detach the thoughts from material things and to fix them on spiritual levels. To be able to do this is of double advantage. First, it enables one to rise out of the blind alley of scientific naturalism into the freedom of the spirit. And secondly, it enables one to appreciate and to enjoy the finer delights of the spirit.

We are so much in the habit of attending moving picture shows and counting things, that it is no easy thing to accustom oneself to devout and attentive spiritual contemplation. Saint Augustine had the same difficulty. He said:

"I strove vehemently against the swarm of visual images, which crowded upon me, and tried to drive them off, but scarcely had I beaten them away when, lo, they gathered again and rushed into my face and blinded my eyes." To accustom oneself in receptive attention to the silent immaterial flow of spiritual currents in their eternal and creative process of becoming, is fitting oneself for a higher university of life and for sharing in the ecstasies of the saints.

But the habit of keeping the mind clear and active cannot save us entirely from sin. As a power to resist temptation it is relatively weak, but if we harbor good thoughts they will at least crowd out that much evil thinking, and will often carry us over the moments of especial danger, and give us time, as it were, to call up our reserves.

The reason that mental control is relatively weak is that actions are directly controlled by the will, which in turn is controlled by the predominant desire. The mind can offer suggestions only, but these suggestions are of the highest value, because they are based on thought and are therefore more to be relied upon than impulse.

But the mind after all is relatively weak when used in direct ways to resist temptation. Fortunately, however, there are other indirect

ways in which the mind works, that give far more promise of assistance. While the mind has small control over the will when natural desire is present, it has comparatively large control over muscular motion where desire does not so largely enter in. Whenever danger threatens safety may lie in muscular motion. Get busy! Move away from the dangerous location or situation. Engage in some activity that requires attention. This finds the vulnerable point in natural desire, for in spite of their power and intensity, most natural desires are spasmodic and transient; their intensity is not lasting but is intermittent. If we can keep busy we can tire out the most insistent temptation. The old saying is very deeply true, "Satan always finds some evil for idle hands to do."

Labor, then, is man's good friend. It not only helps to avoid temptation, but it keeps the physical body free and active and the spirit joyous; the red blood flows more freely in labor; we are alert and cheerful. In honest labor we banish time and worry; we realize objectively our mental visions; we dominate nature; we transform, we produce, we create, we are very gods if we labor.

In fact we may almost say that the only sin is laziness. For through wise habits of industry all other besetting sins may be over-

come. On the other hand, laziness, if it becomes chronic, inevitably results in moral decay, spiritual barrenness, and physical disintegration. It is not the working man that is tempted to be a glutton, to be intemperate, to be lascivious, but it is the idle, the pampered and the rich. Intemperance, gambling, love of excitement, dissipation come with idleness and not from action. This is especially true of lasciviousness. Idle day-dreams, lying abed after sleep is ended, dallying with sexual suggestions, inviting opportunities, are the beginning of sin, and work, good, honest, productive work is salvation. That other besetting sin, selfish impulsiveness, will also disappear in labor. Who can be angry, or proud, or revengeful, or censorious, very long when busy at some creative labor?

Through happy, cheerful work we transform spiritual energy into physical results. Serenity, cheerfulness, hope, enthusiasm, faith and love are spiritual forces that in labor undergo a transformation of energy that restores muscular and nervous expenditure. We never tire from cheerful, happy labor; it is discontent, worry, resentment that make of labor a burden. It is only when we have our own strength of body and mind to draw on that our strength fails. But when we are laboring in harmony with the loving purposes of God,

then we have the right and the ability to draw on the infinite store of energy in universal Love, to supply our lack of strength and failing courage.

If disagreeable kitchen work seven days in the week seems unbearable, if the day's work in factory or on the farm is uncongenial and wearisome, be sure of this, that it is entered into for love of dear ones, for honest purposes, and then ask for and expect to receive strength for the day's need. Love transforms and renews our strength; in fact a labor of love is worship. The heart is open then, as in prayer, to receive the current of God's Love, and as its infinite flow passes through us, it becomes a beneficence to the ones we love and a benediction to ourselves.

If we only had eyes to see, we could detect a constant flow of current passing through us at all times. Sometimes it would be setting inward towards us and from the world without, in ambitious plans, selfish greed and resentful purpose; at other times it would be welling up from within and overflowing towards others in a beneficent tide of unselfish humility and loving service. Labor is natural if it is done for selfish gain and advantage; it is heavenly and spiritual if the current of its purpose sets outward.

If it is true that self-forgetting labor for

those we love is in harmony with the currents of the spiritual life, how much more will be a sober purpose to labor unselfishly for the good of others in a wider sense! There is a tiny element of selfishness in the kindest labor for one's own family and personal friends; a safer and a truer measure of unselfishness is a purpose and a willingness to spend and to be spent for the good of those that are outside the immediate circle of our interests. The Heavenly Father's love broods over all the world, over the just and the unjust, the penitent and the impenitent; and if we are now trying to live a love-controlled life it will mean not only being kind and helpful to the "heathen" in foreign lands, but being kind and helpful to the policeman on our own block, to the wayward daughter of our own wash-woman, to the grocer that frequently gives us short weight by mistake.

A truly love-controlled life will feel a responsibility for the betterment of social conditions near home as well as to the uttermost parts of the earth. I am not sure but working for better schools, for better sanitary conditions, for better public administration, for less outlay and dependence on coast artillery and battleships, is harder and less appreciated labor, and yet more worth while, than is the labor of the chairman of the trustees of the federated

boards of charity organizations. I am quite sure, at any rate, that living a love-controlled life in one's own business, or profession, in the midst of selfish and dishonest, although conventional, ethics, is the hardest kind of labor, and is the kind that the Heavenly Father will highly reward.

God is not so much concerned by the importance of the Grand Opera House in which an act is staged as he is by the spirit with which the act is played. Telling a newsboy on a cold winter's day to "keep the change" is easy, compared with standing firmly against deception on the part of one's own business partner in a deal that promises "millions." But it is to the latter that Jesus will say, "Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."

But there is still a better way even than work to meet and to overcome the temptations that lurk in natural desires. We said a little while ago that the will acted according to predominant desire. Then the thing for us to do is to control our desires. We must learn to crowd out evil desires by good desires. But above all things we must avoid all hypocrisy, speaking with our lips and saying that we hate evil, while in our heart of hearts we are secretly cherishing it. We must refuse to cherish evil desires even secretly; we must

sincerely and persistently disown them and hate every evil thing; and on the other hand we must encourage and respond to every little desire to be good and true and unselfish.

Natural desires are seductive. They often come to us in beautiful and attractive dress, but we must ever be on the alert, lest they deceive us, and if we are to get rid of them we must root them out from their hiding-place which is in the subconscious mind. To control the subconscious desires and thus to secure control of the will and to bring the life into harmony with spiritual ideals, we must take advantage of the only power that is strong enough to do it, and that is the power of love. There is nothing comparable to the expulsive power of a new affection. The thought of home and mother, of love for one's beloved, affection for one's children, devotion to one's country, these are the influences that reach the depths of one's nature.

By making love the supreme motive of life, by always cherishing the Love Thought, by always striving to do the kind deed, we may surely control our subconscious desires.

It is easy to do kind and loving acts for those we love, even when it costs one dearly; it is hard sometimes to love our enemies and to be willing to do good to them that despitefully use us and persecute us; but even this becomes pos-

sible, and almost easy, when we do it to please some one we love, or whose good opinion we covet. To make these hard things easy we must keep in mind father and mother, or one's best beloved, or one's hero and ideal. If we keep these dear ones in mind, the emotion of love will be present and its beneficent power will help us to wise self-control and therefore will keep us from evil.

It is just here that the outside help that the Christian religion offers comes to our assistance. If we are trying to live as Jesus taught men to live, we must make him our nearest and dearest friend, for he can be to us what the living olive trees were to the candlestick in Zachariah's vision, a never failing supply and refreshment.

The Heavenly Father sent Jesus into the world as an expression of His own Love Thought, that whosoever believed and trusted in Him should not perish, but should enter into the higher spiritual life. "For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." There is but one way to successfully live a spiritual life and that is by a loving faith in Jesus as one's personal Saviour, for he alone can profoundly influence and control the subconscious desires.

If we love him with all our heart and mind and understanding; if we make it our supreme

desire to please him in everything that we think, or do, or say, then we cannot help but be successful in the quest for the spiritual life, because the infinite power of the Divine Love Vitality will be abiding within us. "If you love me," said Jesus, "you will keep my commandments, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father and we will come and make our abode in him."

The presence of Jesus in the heart of faith will be a never-failing source of spiritual vitality that will forever well up to the nourishment of a higher spiritual life. There will be an increasing control of the subconscious desires, and an increasing joy and confidence in the reality of the spiritual life.

"To as many as receive him, to them will he give power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

At the very beginning of this sermon we called attention to the necessity of a disciplined will, if we were to develop a higher type of character; then we emphasized the value of quiet thoughtfulness and industry if we were to be guided into right ways of living; and then we tried to make clear the necessity of making love the controlling pur-

pose of the life if we were to make it Christian and successful in the highest sense.

Students of modern psychology have detected two fundamental desires in human personality that seem to point to a higher life. The first is the universal desire for a higher knowledge of truth, and the second is an equally universal desire for a deeper experience of love. One seems to be in the domain of the intellect and the other in the domain of the emotions, but like all things that relate to the human mind they blend together in a deep yearning to know in order to love. The disciplined will can awake and utilize latent and dormant faculties of the soul which will be of assistance in gratifying these desires. It is possible to bend the will in an absorbing search for knowledge as an end in itself, but such a quest will almost certainly end in disappointment. The better way is to hold the disciplined will in a thoughtful and earnest purpose to seek the highest truth in order to love and to be loved. If we can see this highest truth in Jesus and enthrone him in our heart of hearts he can lead us to this higher love for which the soul hungers.

Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father (and that means to the spiritual life) but by me."

Jesus is the Truth in the sense that he provides the intellect with a satisfying solution of the problem of human life, and an adequate and consistent and reasonable rule for the conduct of life. He told us about the Heavenly Father and the reality of the Spiritual Realm; he told us about the ideal relations of that Kingdom of Love, and how through faith we might hope to enter it.

He summed up all the essentials for correct conduct into two commandments: Love towards God and love for one's fellow men. That is, he made love the supreme and only motive and rule of life. Nothing was to come in the way of it, neither friends, nor property, nor the right hand, nor even physical life itself. But in a deeper sense, Jesus did more than to teach us about Truth. He was himself *the Truth.* He himself revealed the character and mind of God; all we know of God we have seen in Jesus. We must think about truth as he taught it, but through love for him and trust in him we shall come to appropriate Truth in a deeper sense than the intellect can even grasp or follow. "We shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make us free."

Jesus is the Way in the sense that through him we pass from the natural into the spiritual; through him we have access to the Father

and the timeless Life of the higher spiritual order. Jesus not only told us about it, he *lived* it, and his life and death and resurrection become the way of life to us. In some mysterious but real sense Jesus takes us into union with himself and by so doing makes atonement for our sin, links us to his holiness, and lifts us up into a higher life of the spirit. "I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "It is Christ in us, that is the hope of glory."

Jesus is the Life in the sense that he is the vitality by which the natural man is enabled to advance into the spiritual life process. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him who sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life. . . . For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave He to the Son also to have life in himself." That is, the essence of the spiritual life is the spirit of Jesus, which is the vitality of Love.

It is by the redemptive grace of God, through Jesus our Saviour that we are enabled to resist and to transmute the resistless importunities of the natural desires and to become children of the Spiritual Realm. It is the power that can change a selfish, impulsive man into a loving child of God, it is the cos-

mic power that ultimately will make of all people and of all nations and of all cosmic realms one Kingdom of our Lord, for God is Love.

About a century ago with the study of modern science, there developed a school of thought that tried to reduce the place of Jesus in religious history to that of a superior teacher and of a perfect manhood; he was to be considered as the highest product of spiritual evolution on the natural plane; he was even to be considered as divine in the sense that he more than any other man revealed the mind of God to men.

But this limited conception of Jesus never satisfied the great heart of the Church and has not stood the test of time; its acceptance is far less general to-day than it was a generation ago. There may be more hesitancy to-day in describing in words just what we mean by the divinity of Jesus, but there is no doubt that such a faith constitutes as never before the very basis of our Christian religion.

Christian faith in the incarnation sees in the historical event that happened two thousand years ago the breaking through of a cosmic process that is being repeated continually in the personal life of all those who truly believe in Jesus as their Divine Saviour. The incarnation is an everlasting bringing forth and becoming

of the divine and spiritual life, the pure life of the Father of Love, of which Jesus was the perfect revelation. The infinitude and perfectness of Absolute Love is too high a Reality to be directly communicated to mortal minds. There must needs come through the veil and illusions of time and sense One who can not only live and teach the spiritual life, but One who in himself is Life; one who can reveal love and self-sacrifice in human terms, as well as One who in himself can reveal for our accommodation the infinitely loving heart of a living, throbbing universe and its Sovereign Personality.

Such an historical event is, humanly speaking, necessary, if human life is to be lifted up to a higher plane of spiritual life and be shown that it belongs there. "In the fullness of time this Love Thought (Jesus) was expressed in a human life that lived among us, and we beheld his glory,—the glory that belonged to him as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; and of his fullness we are ever receiving grace upon grace."[1] It is this quickening communication of grace from God to man, in a form that is assimilable by man, that is the basic warrant for the Christian faith.

The atonement is not an idea simply that has value to the intellect as an example or ideal of love, for Jesus is "life in himself." The atone-

[1] "The Good News of a Spiritual Realm," p. 17.

ment is an essential principle of the higher spiritual vitality; it is the living way that the world's wisest and best have longed to find that they might see God. It is because of and through the humanity of Jesus that the soul gets a first true consciousness of God by reason of which he is enabled to move towards the ascent to the spiritual life. How else could man link up with the Infinite except through some such life process as faith in Jesus inaugurates? Without the historic Jesus the tendency of faith in God would be to magnify the immanence of an unconditioned Absolute, until his loving Personality was lost; with Jesus there is endless and loving communion with a Heavenly Father who is seen to be both immanent and transcendent.

In the words of Miss Herman, "God, then, . . . created the world by his redemptive power. . . . His creative activity is none other than the redeeming Love which subdues chaos to order, brings good out of evil and woos foolish, sinful human hearts to filial obedience. The Creator is the Saviour and his creative fiat is the first act of redemption, as his giving his Son to be our very Brother is the crowning act of creation."

We believe Jesus to be divine because we see in him the love and the power of the eternal life process of the Spirit. There is first the

devout and loving desire of the Galilean maiden; then the welling forth of Life that is more than life, with the rays of glory and of music piercing the clouds of earthly night and promising celestial peace and good will; then there comes the valley of humiliation, the obscure and humble birth, poverty, labor and temptation; then comes the illumination of service and contemplation; followed by "the dark night of the soul," when even God seems far away; and then through the death of the body and the glorious resurrection comes the awakening into realization and the glad return to his source in the Father of Love. But even this does not complete the cycle of the eternal life process of the Spirit, for with the glad return to union with the Divine there come the joyous days of harvest. "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." Jesus said, "I will come again."

The first fruit of true wedlock is the awakened vision and enthusiasm for service. "As a bridegroom cometh out of his chamber and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race;" and the corresponding self-abnegation of motherhood, rejoicing to suffer all, to give all for mother-love. The end of the quest for the spiritual life is not barren ecstasy in communion with the Source of love, but implicit within is

the spirit of self-sacrificing service. The soul that has passed all the stages of the quest to the Unitive Life, who has satisfied "the divine unrest of his human incompleteness," who has been so signally honored, and who has experienced such unspeakable delights, accepts without question as an integral part of them the pains and the burdensome duties of parenthood by gladly becoming a source of fresh spiritual desire and life in others. The true lover completes his personality in giving it up in self-sacrificing devotion. The divine "elan vital," that is back of all high desire, is not impersonal, blind force, but is love-wise and makes those who yield to it love-wise in a life of kindly service.

In the quest for the spiritual life men transcend the natural life, only to return to it in beneficent lives of service, as creators of spiritual families, as fellow laborers with Jesus in the work wherein God has set him, even the redemption of the world.

Eckhart, one of the sanest of the saintly mystics, finishes one of his ecstatic speculations concerning communion with the Unseen by saying abruptly: "But if it takes not place in me, what avails it? Everything lies in this, that it should take place in me." Are we who have caught a ray of "the light that was never on sea or land," are we ready to follow the gleam? Are

we willing to let this spiritual life process take place in us? Are we ready to face the stress of desire and humiliation that we may secure illumination? Can we face unflinchingly "the dark night of the soul" that we, too, may experience the conscious unification with the Father of Love? Knowing that the end of it all will be to return to our own place and our own work, to spend and to be spent in a simple life of loving service?

Yes—yes. One and another are willing and ready to begin the Quest. At first the only thing you will be conscious of will be a deep and constraining desire to be better, to be more worthy, and then there will mingle with it a desire for sympathy and help. This is the time for prayer, for communion with the Heavenly Father. Just as the secret of physical life seems to be hidden in the arterial circulation of the blood, so the secret of spiritual life is in the sincere prayer currents of communion with the Infinite Father of Love. "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed." Just as soon as we enthrone Love as chief of our subconscious desires, just so soon do we instinctively begin to pray. If the soul's sincere desire is to be loving and spiritually minded, we cannot keep from praying.

The very attitude of prayer is one of desire, of receptivity; at that time the soul is

nearest attuned to spiritual influences, the channels are most open for the inflowing of spiritual vitality. In the state of devout prayer, one has put aside for the moment the natural faculty of the intellect and is employing unhampered the spiritual faculty of the intuition; one is feeling out after God, if perchance one might find Him, although He is not far from any one.

The quest for the spiritual life from the manward side is an adventure in faith for a higher life, and in the experiences of that adventure one comes to know the inadequacy of human mind and strength for the task; at such a time the heart turns through Jesus to God for divine guidance and strength, and God is more ready to give than we are to ask. His answer is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Divine Love Vitality.

The Godward side of faith is the work of the Holy Spirit energizing a spiritual life process, that is to be nourished and guided and protected by the Divine Love Vitality that enters the soul most freely during the moments of prayer. If the moments of prayer become less frequent and insincere and finally are omitted altogether, then the new spiritual life withers and dies. "But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," this need never happen. God has willed from the be-

ginning of the world the redemption of his children, and so long as they pray in faith and humble trust, He will perfect his work. The Holy Spirit, indwelling, will teach one to pray more perfectly, will give one an ever-clearing instinct for love and reality, and then by infused grace will lead one along the way of humility, through illumination and discipline, to union with Himself. The success with which one will follow this Way will depend upon the intensity of his love and faith, his capacity for self-discipline, his courage and his patience. But if he move at all, he will move along these well-marked stages of desire and awakening, humility and enlightenment, discipline and self-abasement, into the fullness of the spiritual unity and tranquillity and service.

The germ of spiritual life is inherent in every human being, and it is only by the Divine Love Vitality that it is quickened into life; but it is true also that it is only by the deliberate fostering of the deeper and higher self that this transformation of the elements of character can be brought to fruition. And when the human soul emerges from the long quest for the spiritual life, "he finds himself back, almost where he began, a little child on his father's breast, and in that most dear relation finds all feeling, will, and thought have attained their end."

When the saintly George Matheson as a young man learned that he was to become incurably blind, he went to his betrothed and offered to release her from the engagement, which release she accepted. George Matheson returned to his room and in the loneliness and bitterness of the thought of his coming blindness, he struggled with the added sorrow of the loss of the one he loved. In the agony of these earthly losses, his deeper and higher love for Jesus held firm and he wrote out the beautiful hymn that must close these sermons:

"Oh Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be."

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